

A Backward Look

The month of June is upon us, and the deadline for the submission of family histories to the planned Grant County Family History is still set for West Virginia Day, June 20. The outpouring of interest has been astounding. I felt I knew about as much about Grant County history as anyone, but my information about the lives of the people was sorely limited, as one would expect.

For the remaining editions of the *Press* prior to June 20th, I plan to publish a few of the submitted histories. Some will be shared in their entirety. Others will have excerpts taken from them. The sole intent is to show interesting and informative writing about people we know or would have enjoyed knowing.

Because of its informative nature, this week I want to share a submission from Dr. Elizabeth Weimer Frye, a professor at Fairmont State College. Begging her indulgence in this "teaching" effort, I hope that you'll read this with the enjoyment I had and submit something similar about your own family.

The Israel and Margaret Weimer Family

"Jacob Weimer (11/3/1825 to 6/19/1905) came to what is now West Virginia from Pennsylvania. His great-grandfather John Weimer was a Revolutionary War soldier from Somerset County. Jacob married Diana Fike from Preston County and moved to an area of what became Grant County near the head of Cosner/Maysville Gap. His son, Israel, became a preacher in the Brick Church of the Brethren, which was built on land adjoining the Weimer

farm in 1866. Jacob is buried in the Goldizen Cemetery on Jordan Run in Grant County. Diana died on October 16, 1899, while visiting her children in the west and is buried in Moscow, Idaho.

Israel Weimer (11/10/1853 to 1/11/1929) was a man of God and a man of the mountains; he never took money for preaching, but he would accept gifts such as flour from members of the congregation. Israel married Margaret Burgess (3/16/1855 to 1/17/1928). Margaret was the daughter of John T. Burgess and Anna Elizabeth Kessel. Israel and Margaret raised a family of nine children on a mountain farm, near Streby, which was given to her by her father.

During the 1870s, Israel built a log house, a chicken house, barn, shop, cellar, milk house and sugar camp on the property. This rustic homestead, which is just northeast of Stack Rocks, runs from the fore knobs of Allegheny (Front) Mountain to the top of that mountain. The Weimer Plains and the Weimer Beechwoods are west of the farm on the same mountain plateau as Bear Rocks and the location of the old Stony River Dam. The sites of their home can be reached from the road going up the mountain at the old Streby School.

The Israel Weimer family lived "on the mountain" until approximately the turn of the century. Shortly thereafter, the old log house became the home of their son, Asa Weimer, and his family. The home was abandoned after the death from diphtheria of Asa's two sons, Eddie and Otha, in February 1907. Ac-

cording to family legend, the house was burned after 1915 because of the fear that the disease could still be caught from "germs" left in the house.

In approximately 1922, the Babcock Lumber Company built two railroad grades through the Weimer Place, i.e., the Israel and Margaret Weimer home place. At this time the largest virgin hardwood trees on the land were cut and hauled back over the mountain, through Canaan Valley, to the lumber mill in Davis. During the draught in the early 1930s, forest fires ranged on the top of the Allegheny Plateau and on Allegheny Front; at that time, the remained outbuildings on the Weimer Place burned.

Oscar Weimer bought the Weimer Place from his mother and passed it on to his children when he died in 1932. Today the farm is owned by Israel and Margaret's grandson, Bruce Weimer, and four of his great-grandchildren: George Bowen, Libby Weimer Frye, Margie Weimer Boor and Ed Weimer. The Weimer Place is a favorite hunting spot for many descendants of Israel and Margaret. The spring used by the family is one branch of the trout stream called Little Star Run, better known as Weimer Run to the family. This clear, cold mountain water is still pure enough to be drunk daily at the foot of the mountain by Bessie Weimer Berg and her family. (Bessie is a daughter of Asa Weimer; she has lived on land purchased by her great-grandfather, John T. Burgess, all of her life.)

The children of Israel and Margaret Weimer included: Mary Ellen



By Harold Garber



The Israel and Margaret Weimer family (circa 1895) (front row) Israel, Lula (Smith), Ada (Smith) and Margaret Burgess Weimer; (second row) Oscar, Gertrude (Cooper) and Bessie Weimer; (third row) Edward, Asa, Mary (Dolly) and Lettie (Foley).

(4/24/1876 to 8/2/1941), who married George Eston Dolly; Asa Harman Weimer (6/9/1877 to 8/10/1948, who married (1) Mary E. Keplinger and (2) Mae Bolton; Edward Amos Weimer (11/15/1878 to 4/6/1902), who never married; Lettie Ann (8/14/1880 to 7/8/1951), who married Michael Foley; Ida Gertrude "Ger-tie" (2/9/1882 to 4/25/1963), who married William Cooper; Oscar James (11/11/1883 to 2/1/1932), who married Charlotte "Lottie"

Evans; Bessie Mae (5/11/1886 to 7/12/1908), who never married; Ada Dorcas (3/3/1890 to 10/30/1907), who married Irad J. Smith; and Lula Pearl (3/12/1893 to 11/16/1909) who also married Irad J. Smith.

Many of the progeny of Israel and Margaret Weimer still live in West Virginia; most of those who left consider the Mountain State as home. The vast majority of these descendants are God-fearing, loving, honest, hard-working, timber-

men, factory workers and carpenters; a few were called to preach, to work helping the sick or to serve this nation in military service. All in all, one gets the feeling that Israel and Margaret raised their children well. Their strong heritage of loving God, family, the mountains of West Virginia and the United States of America is still being carried forward by their hundreds of descendants."